

*your
secretary
#2*



i learned how to wear make-up from a girl named betty. it seems no coincidence that the skaters from my middle school called all pretty girls "betty" the two betties i know are both beautiful. my mother's given name is betty, though she goes by an androgynous moniker instead. i

was haunted as a child by pictures of my mother's modelling career. she told me not to wear make-up, so i didn't. i couldn't shave my legs, so i never have. i laughed at all the stories of gay girls falling for straight best friends, but there i was perched on the edge of her boyfriend's bathtub letting betty put make-up on me.

my ♥ hurt all the time and i knew i had to get out of town. i got mugged walking home from a party the same week alex told me he needed a new roommate in chicago. things were falling apart and together while the snow turned brown melting in the gutters. detroit was my closet where everyone just thought i was shaun's hag or dan's ex or the crazy girl who left a barrel of catshit on evan's lawn. i was tired of fucking "straight" girls who'd go back to their boyfriends in

the morning because it was "easier." There were a handful of queers and hos who made life bearable, but i spent an entire winter month behind the basement barred windows watching nine seasons of roseanne in an unheated apartment. i still went to menjo's with shaun and klair on thursdays, even after the xanadu remodel and the price of their rubbing alcohol mixed drinks were increased from \$1 to \$2. no amount of shenanigans made me feel differently - not the scuba diving classes i indulged in, the non-profit i worked for, or even saturday margarita night at cass cafe. i was privileged beyond belief, but the feeling of breathing underwater was as surreal as i felt in my daily life walking down warren with detroit cops yelling at me to "clean up my dogs crap." my first night in chicago nick john ditched me at madonna night only to arrive at my new apartment the next day declaring, "licking assholes is not as great as i thought it would be."

i say that after our fancy bday dinner that i am meeting someone for a movie which is by an act of conflation turned into a date by my family. everyone is teasing me in a way only the baby in the family, even at the age of 30, gets razzed. "is he cute?" is the chant from my cousin and sister-in-law. my dad is shifting uncomfortably in his leather chair. my mom is gripping her napkin under the table. "mom, you know i am not meeting a man." through her gritted teeth she says, "well, there's a 50% chance." "no, mom," i counter, "there is a 100% chance she is not."

and this conversation seems too ridiculous in the grand scheme of things. it is spinning out of time and space. i have considered myself out since high school when adrienne and i might not have been girlfriends,

but everyone (including my mother) knew we were fucking after school on my rattly twin bed.

...but my parents deny any and everything that is inconvenient in their empire of silence. my father especially is the king of denial. when i graduated from high school with a full ride to automechanic school he asked if i could go to the school's sister hospitality school instead. "aaa!" i shouted, "i am hostile! not hospitable!" they think everything is a fad or trend or worse, an new rebellion. they are in denial about everything they don't like about me - that i am fat (and proud), that i like to live in the city, that i ♥ detroit, that my friends are not all white, middle class, and almost none of them are straight, that i am a heavily tattooed women. my father goes so far as to tell me that if i were to fall in love with a person of color i would be doing it with the sole purpose and

intent to upset him. in his mind
i am an extension of him and
everything i do is about him.

while the concept of coming out
can be cathartic and self-actual-
izing it is still based on the
idea of "straight as default"
while that paradigm continues,
how out can you be? there are
always be situations anew for
coming out. it has been shown
that society is more "accepting"
of LGBTQAI (and the rest of the
alphabet) if they know us, but
this seems the old game of the
oppressed having to teach the
(cough cough) repressed about
our (seriously!) undeniable
humanity. the goal of coming
out can be to normalize gay
people. to me it seems quite
othering in that it puts the
onus on us to declare ourselves,
sometimes to great anxiety.
stating, for others consumption,
something that is a natural and
ingrained as the hand we favor
to flip you off.

if you don't know i am queer you
don't know me very well.

the idea of coming out is so tied to our family of origin saying, "you are okay," but there are so many ways family's tell ALL of us that we aren't exactly what they expected when the stork dropped us off that queerness (esp in a queer theory sense) is a moot point. i know that if i brought jesus himself home to mom and dad they might say "isn't his hair a little long?" having family say "you are okay" or even better "at 30, you know better who you are, what you need than we even will." this is a thing i don't need to hear anymore from anyone. i just do it.

"for an ex-sex worker you sure are a prude." butchie says to me after the six whisky gingers that landed me in her bed have worn off. inside i am thinking "way to be so fucked up & shaming," but on the outside i am still and quiet. later when i

realize i had left my favorite octopus necklace at her place and want it back she refuses. "listen, you seem like you

want a girlfriend and i am not in the market for a girlfriend."

"shit!" i shake my head, "the fact that i didn't want to have sex with you should be a clue that i clearly don't want to date you either." with much

disdain she tells our mutual friends i don't put out and

LB buys me a replacement octopus.

"look at that" i say, pointing into my 8x8 bedroom, "look at my bed." my bed is slouched all over the place, devouring the room, a big consuming mouth.

"what a mess." when i was 19 i got my first big girl bed. my

parents said this would be my bed until i got married. i was married on that bed night after night until we thrust it out the window on a bright january afternoon. we watched it crash down on the neighbor's porch, crushing their lawn furniture. every 3 years i got a new bed, breaking each in succession. it was a joke in my family- a jump here, fuck there, a prowling drag out fight. in chicago i have had 3 beds. the futon from alex's mom's basement, christianed by neglected cats. reba's old hospital bed with the headboard for leverage and this princess & the pea monstrosity. a frankenstein composed of discards from departing roommates. it started with a lone mattress on the floor. girls would actually sleep with me on that miserable bed, an ocean of dog fur and floor grit washing over our bodies. miserable lays on that miserable bed. now i have two matt-

resses and a box spring, slipping and sliding all over each other each night, dumping me on

the floor each morning, puking
up books and twisted underwear,
scissors and ballpoint pens.

meredith tells me that after she
heard i'd had my ♥ broken by
some gay girl she didn't know,
that she used the few words she'd
heard to describe this mythical
woman to find her on the world
wide web. "she seems so arrogant
and self important," mere says in
a bid to cheer me up, but i hunch
my shoulders and turn my face
away, feeling instantly sick to
my stomach i wrap my arms around
myself, an anchor. "listen," mere
says in her low, sometimes inaudi-
ble way, "finding a girlfriend in
this town is like trying to get a
tenure position. you basically
gotta wait for someone to die."

i thought i was the last person
on earth to still sport a con-

spicuous facial piercing, but today i met a cute girl with an obvious nosering. obvious because it was not one of those small sparkley studs. effie claims straight girls wear to flag that they are not too uptight to enjoy anal sex, no, this was an obvious nosERING and i stared at it while she stared at me.

there has always been a policy of secrecy and silence in my family which i have defied at every turn. even as a child i was a non-stop chatterbox and divulger of private details who provided a running commentary on our life. at 5 i became the designated patient, attending therapy weekly to discuss my uncontrollable anger and violent outbursts. as an adult, my therapist tells me that anger like that in children is usually a sign

that said child feels unable to communicate.

although there were pictures of mark in our house i didn't know he was my brother until i was 8. it wasn't until my mid-twenties that i heard the story of his death. this knowledge did not come from my family. i was 6 months old when mark & the girl who was his passenger dies in a drunk driving crash. according to the story i was told the wreck was caused by more than alcohol. the only time my mom acknowledged the existence of this girl was when i explicitly asked if my mom had attended her funeral. "no, she was a bad influence," the subtext being that my mom blamed her for the accident. i wish i knew my brother's girlfriend's name.

i have been told it is easier for me because i never knew mark. essence i don't know what i am missing, but living with the mythology (constructed with the few scraps of info i have about mark's life) has been

like living with a ghost,
overcast, in and with a
shadow. the grief & loss that
has informed my childhood &
my relationship with my
parents has not been easy
either. i often feel kinship
with others who have dealt
with sudden loss early in life.
i feel that mark was taken from
us not only by his death, but our
inability to talk about him.

it is important to share your
story no matter how many times
it has been told, how simple,
self indulgent, poorly edited,
articulated or imagined. please
don't be silenced or shamed. your
story is important. your words
are important. do not let any-
one, any authority, (say the story
of you is not worth telling.

after dave and mike and sean i just can't make sense of it anymore. i ask my mom how mrs. p deals with keith's suicide.

"with guilt," my mom says. "how do you deal with mark's death?"

"we never talked to anyone about mark's death and maybe we should have, but it's too late now."

and i take a deep breath and say "it's never too late. there is always time. i am always here to talk about mark."

and she tells me,

"it's still too hard."

when i say i'm from detroit, people always ask "detroit proper?" because here in the windy city people from all over southeast michigan say they're from detroit. when they ask where i'm ~~from~~ REALLY from i don't know how to answer they city where i was born? the town where my father's best

friend built the house i grew up in? the notoriously racist town where i went to high school? baltimore - the first city i wasted away, homesick? dc and nova where i celebrated my 21st year by throwing my specially made diabetic birthday cake in a baby pool while my girlfriend fucked a marine next door? london, where chris and i played house for 6 months fabulous ferndale where i was homeowner of the most disreputable house on the block? detroit, where i fought with slumlords like everyone else?

but i know i am from detroit despite everywhere else i have laid my head. she tells me anyone who knows what it's like to turn a trick in the leland hotel is from detroit. anyone who has driven the non-profit's van the wrong way on an off ramp with impunity is from detroit. anyone who has gotten high in the makeshift office in the middle of the shrinking cities exhibit or thrown a handful of expensive french cheese down the front of an autoshow sponsors blouse or been held up with an ax or car-jacked with a broken crackpipe

or ripped down a bathroom stall
in a show of gay rage and been
permanently banned from malebox
is from detroit. anyone who has
picked a fight with ~~the~~ ~~but~~ a
bartender in the middle of uni-
versity foods over the honor of
a beautiful girl is from detroit.
and of course you have a mail-
box at university foods to get
your zine mail if you live in
detroit. anyone who has ever laid
in the piss stained street sob-
bing begging to be allowed to self-
destruct in peace like any good
detroiter or any of the 100s of
other dehumanizing things that
happen while you are trying to
survive in detroit.

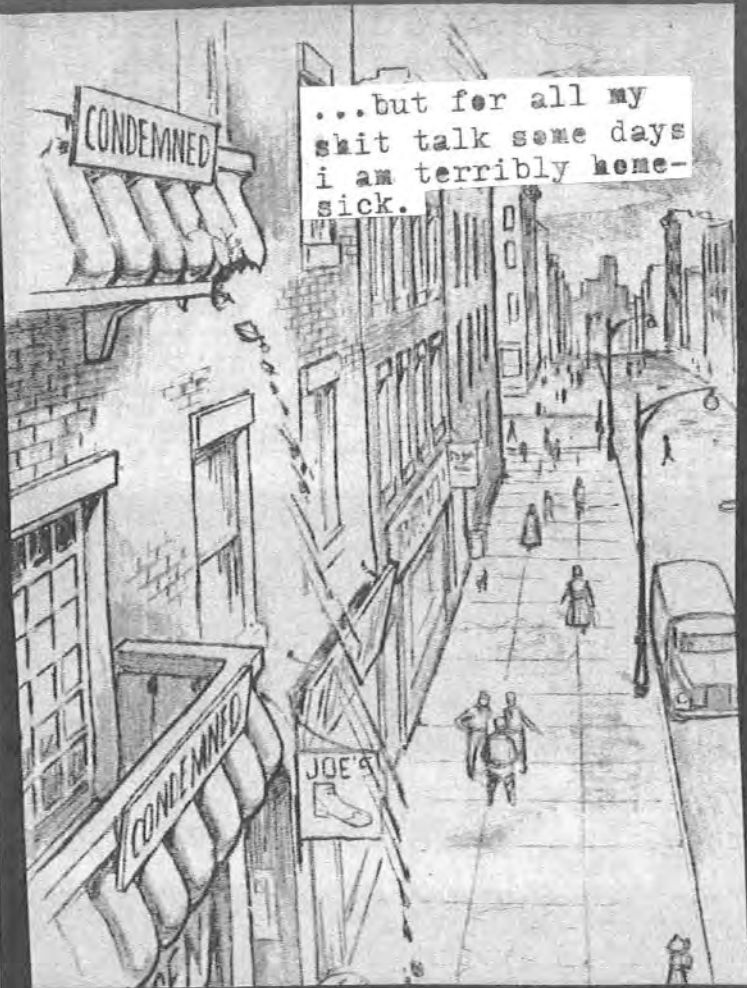
"detroit is all about harm re-
duction," she says while snorting and
coke of the floor of our favorite
dive bar, "detroit is lawless, just
like you."

CONDEMNED

...but for all my
shit talk some days
i am terribly home-
sick.

CONDEMNED

JOE'S



katie says jen is "the whole package." i ask if i am "the whole package." after a pause katie says, "you are a good storyteller" which is good enough. kirstin uses the term "whole package" to describe someone who's got it all - brains, beauty, integrity, confidence.

you have to be your own "whole package."

you are "the whole package"

finished feb 2010

EXCUSE 17/HEAVENS TO BETSY

♥ to SHAUN

alex

kirstin

meredith

andrea

LB

katie

jen

brittany

nick john

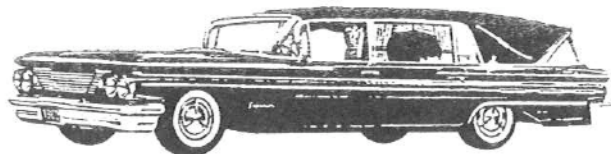
alana

and

you.

HEAVEN STREET



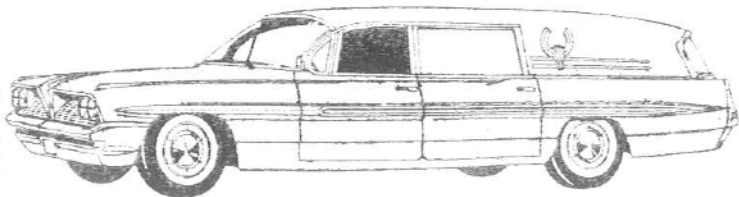


adventures in public transit

Before moving to Seattle, I never rode on public transit. I never really had a reason to - I had a car and public transit in Detroit was notoriously shitty. Buses would take forever to get anywhere and when they did, they often arrived on fire with collapsed axles and ~~fl~~ sparks shooting from their frames. Based on that and my terrible luck concerning bicycles, I decided it best to stick with my trusty Ford Escort. However, one of the main sacrifices I made when moving cross country was to finally forsake my life of automotive autonomy in favor of walking and riding buses everywhere. I enroll-

1. Leaving school, I board the bus and procure a seat towards the back. Unfortunately, a nearby crackhead has noticed my tupperware container full of freshly made baked goods and has made it her mission to become my new bff.

'Wooooowwww!', she slurs as she eyes my container of shortbread cookies, 'those look GOOOOOOOO DDDDD...'. The word 'good' is espoused in a miniature yowl that ends in a lightened intonation ~~xx~~ that makes the statement seem like a question. "Are those cookies good? I don't know but I'm gonna find out!" Meanwhile, as this is happening, a young, enterprising 20-something is trying his best to sell a gigantic bottle of

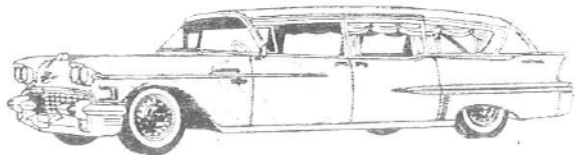


2. Meth couple strolls~~xxxx~~ casually onto the bus and of course, have to sit by me. After some initial fidgetting and rearranging of bags, talk soon turns to a recent visit to their friend's house and the unfortunate results of it.

'I don't understand why I is so pissed off at me', meth male drawls while thoughtfully touching his wisened, scraggly goatee; 'It's not like I did anything wrong.'

Meth female is incredulous. 'Didn't do anything wrong?! You broke my's dust pan!!'

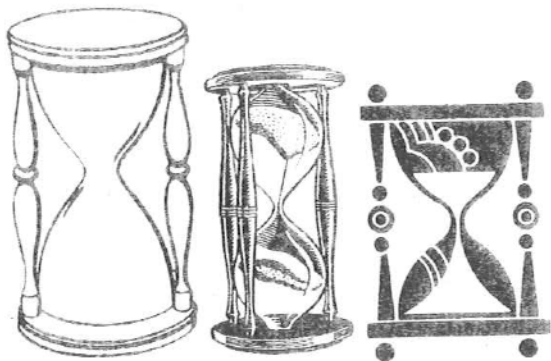
Meth male wrinkles his nose and shrugs his shoulders before his lady friend replies that he upset their friend because she had just bought the now broken dust pan and that it had





'What you must remember is that we are not normal people. We don't do things that normal people do. We worship death.'

Euronymous



Shouldn't I be waxing internally poetic about every landmark, about my last visits to the liquor store on Trumbull and Forest? So many drunken nights spent driving home whilst talking to Richard, stumbling up the wooden sidewalk to my front door, smoking a pack and a half of cigarettes only to awake wheezing the next day. This isn't romantic because it's nothing to be romanticized. I'm not one of those tortured writer souls who automatically assigns meaning to everything, but leaving Detroit felt almost anti-climatic in a way I never thought imaginable.



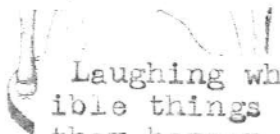
Detroit is...

summers spent drinking beer
at the beach on belle isle,
as flamin' hot cheetos bags
blow in the breeze and sea
gulls scream overhead only
to have empty budweiser bot-
tles thrown at them upon
landing.



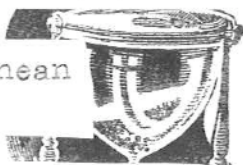
crackheads dancing in random intersections

frëaking out to that 'touch me and then just feel me until i get my satisfaction' song with jami at City Club



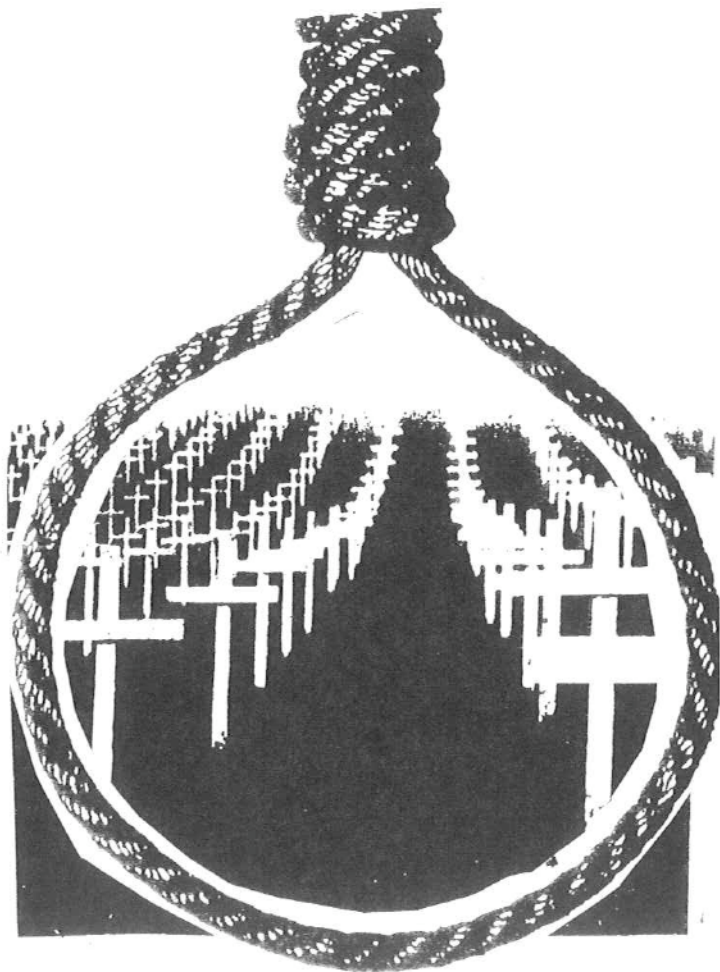
Laughing when shitty, terrible things happen because they happen to everyone at least once in the city

the best meditteranean food ever



white stripes and wolf eyes and adult with a period at the end of it







Dear Detroit,

I'm actually not sorry about leaving. i always thought I would be when I eventually did get around to it, but I haven't felt the sadness or feelings of homesickness that I ~~thought~~ thought were inevitable. It's weird but I think it was just time. We had a good run and some good times, but I had to go. It was time to move on. Still, I'll always love you in one way or another, whatever.
Fuck it.

Love, Shaun



This zine was
created over
2 nerve-wracking
days in February 2010.

I hope that you like it.

Thanks to Jami and Richard.

Shawn Allen 1400 Western Ave.

Box 401 Seattle, WA 98101

ed in culinary school out in Tukwila when I first arrived here, after which i subsequently resigned myself to the fact that I would be riding the bus to and from school 5 days a week. I thought i was mentally strong enough to deal with this emerging facet of my life. Unfortunately, I thought wrong.

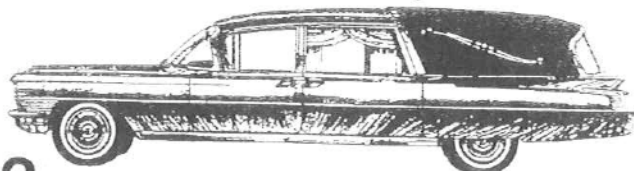
Riding the bus is an experience that can't be summed up by simply saying it sucks. It can be amusing, annoying, funny, exasperating, but yeah...well, I'm not gonna lie --it's a mostly annoying little slice of hell. The 150 from Seattle to Tukwila was the first place in which i realized that crackheads DO exist in this city, and that they are most likely singing, screaming, puking and/or a combination of all of the above towards the back of the bus whilst you are just trying to make your way to school to make some goddamned bread and cakes. Highlights during my 3 month sojourn on public transit as of now include the following:

ewwww oe toilet to an unforgiving middle aged female passenger who has taken time out of her busy schedule of being called a 'fucking bitch' by her teenage daughter to converse with said seller. I try my best to feign disinterest until crackhead lady grabs my arm and demands a cookie.

'This is okay...i guess', she declares as she bites into the cookie. Afterwards, she ~~proceeds~~ proceeds to rant on about her son that was shot in oak harbor and how the whole state is gonna pay for that until finally, she screams 'NORMAN' at the top of her lungs. This magical incantation manages to arouse a man in the corner who looks like a living dust ball, after which they depart the bus whilst passionately debating the merits of going to kress supermarket downtown.



cost her 5.99. Upon hearing this, meth male stands up and begins to cackle on about how fucked up that was and how he 'would've given her 4 dollars back if he would've bought it' and on and on. Meth female has been apparently brought to her last raw nerve and slams her hands against the back of the seat before quietly whispering 'why are you like this? why can't you be nice?' Meth male immediately takes to the aisle, face red and swollen before yowling 'I JUST TRIED TO LOVE YOU BUT YOU WON'T LET ME', before sitting down and immediately falling asleep next to his lady.



3. LASTLY, WHAT IF GOD WAS ONE OF US

WWJD, assholes



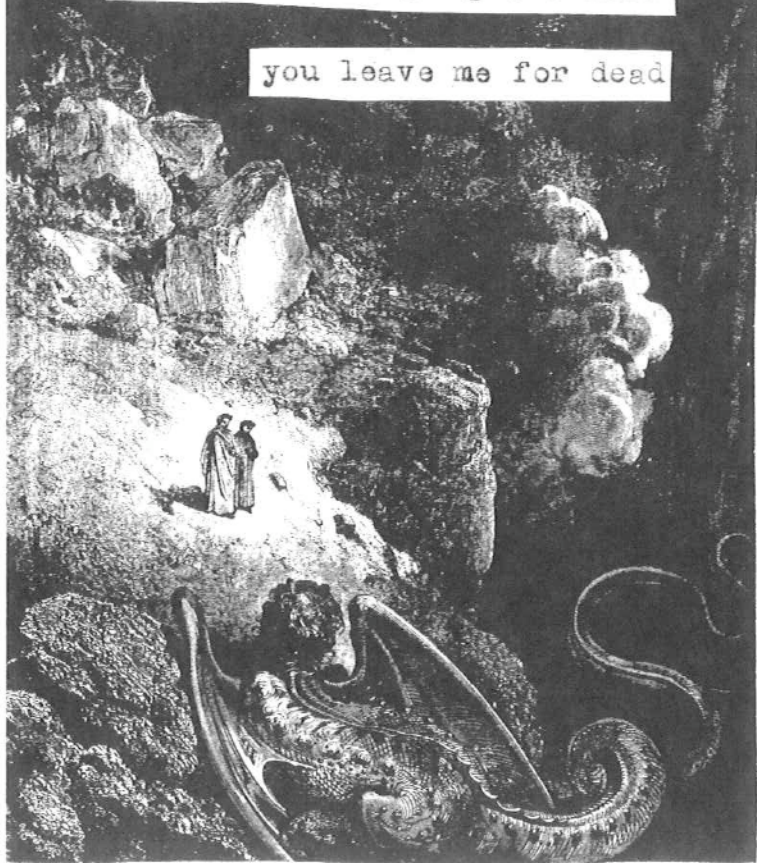
My last week



in Detroit went

out with more of a fizzle than any kind of bang. MY band played our last show a little over a year after we had played our first--and only--show. I shipped out some boxes, packed up my computer and sold my car. Ate at Los Altos, Slow's and Sicily's one last time. I got my windshield smashed in by some random asshole who threw a rock at my car as I drove down Bagley on the way home from Honey Bee. Goodbyes were said. I spent most of my days driving around, taking shitty pictures of a debatedly shitty city on a certainly shitty camera. It just felt like something was missing. Shouldn't I be feeling more?

It'll be more poignant once

you leave me for dead



- sneers from the patrons of gay night at the atlas bar after you and a friend loudly deride 'all of these fags dancing to new order'.
- sneers from the patrons of every gay bar period. 
- drag queen performances that include 20 minutes of ranting about their 'bitch-ass room-mates'. 
- the 6 dollar manager's special from sicily's in mexicantown
- driving down woodward at dusk, feeling that almost anything is possible
- driving down woodward in the wintertime and feeling that everything is hopeless and that you'd might as well just go home and get drunk



old houses and multiple
roommates/cheap rent that
half your roommates can't
pay cuz it's noon and they're
drunk again, have no jobs and
just spent all their money
on records

summer shows at the detroit
art space r.i.p.


DETROIT JUST IS, FOREVER AND EVER..

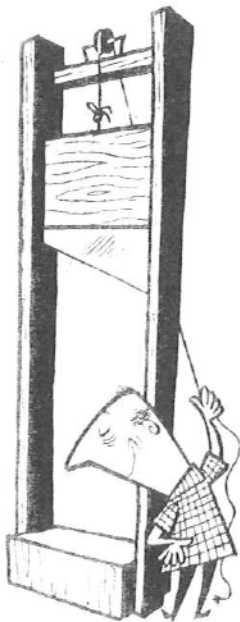


Dear _____,

You are the love of my life. You made what **should** have been one of the hardest decisions of my life easy **and** you make everyday better for me by just being here. My heart nearly explodes every time we sing 'Angel of Death' together. I love you.

Xoxo,
Shaun





NICE TO MEET YOU.
HAVE A NICE DAY.